

YOUR
Negotiation Team

Scott Gillies
Chief Negotiator

Scott Colwell
Mary DeCoste
David Josephy
Herb Kunze
Sue Hubers

The UGFA's negotiating team will begin to meet today with representatives of the University of Guelph's Administration to negotiate a new Collective Agreement.

Beyond important questions regarding Members' pensions and compensation, these negotiations will address the growing imposition of administrative control over all of Members' professional activities as well as the implications of the proposed budget cuts. The future of the university and its academic mission, as well as the role of faculty in this institution, is at stake.

The recent survey used to develop the UGFA's bargaining objectives revealed that Members' primary concerns included not only threats to job security, but also the rising incidence of administrative imposition and the dismantling of academic governance. A recent example of such imposition is the Sedona e-CV project. Members across campus have reported that much of their professional information was entered incorrectly, thus requiring hours and hours of their time to correct. Moreover the Sedona software is exceptionally limiting as a tool to record the broad range of scholarly activities which Members have previously been able to present in the Tenure and Promotion (T&P) process. The e-CV represents a colossal make-work project with no benefit to faculty and academic staff. This is part of the reason why the UGFA is proceeding to arbitration.

The Program Prioritization Process (PPP) provides the greatest example of the dismantling of academic governance at this institution. At its core, the PPP represents the triumph of the Board of Governors over the Senate and other collegial processes in 'managing' the university. Relying on an American consultant, with no input from faculty, the Administration unilaterally designed a process to create winners and losers. Despite objections from the UGFA, and from individual Members, the Administration combined the evaluation of academic with non-academic programs in order to justify cuts to college budgets and the closure of academic programs. The involvement of the Senate came only at the **end** of the process, when it was merely presented with the PPP Task Force Report. In light of these developments, the UGFA's bargaining objectives include

curtailing the Administration's scope for invoking "management rights." The Administration's recent closure of the regional campuses at Alfred and Kemptville showed that Senate provides no protection for academic programs. These closures also demonstrated, however, the crucial protection which Article 24 of the Collective Agreement between the UGFA and the University of Guelph provides to UGFA Members in the case of academic restructuring or program closures. While non-academic staff at Alfred and Kemptville were simply laid off, Article 24 ensured that the UGFA Members at these regional campuses had the option of buy-outs or redeployment. The proposed budget cuts can only be achieved through laying off tenured faculty, but Article 24, as currently written, will not allow this. In the coming negotiations UGFA will, if required, defend Article 24 with all means at our disposal. This week, UGFA and management will be meeting and exchanging proposals. We will update you as to any management proposal on amendment to Article 24.

The imposition of the PPP and the dismantling of academic governance have other implications. The Administration has made clear that it wants the power to alter Members' Distribution of Effort (DOE) unilaterally in order to increase their workload. Members report that their workload has increased significantly, due not only to increasing class sizes and declining TA support but also to the continual down-loading of administrative tasks on to faculty. Yet the Administration has suggested that the standard identification of 20% DOE for Service is unjustified and that this component represents additional "resources" which might be "unlocked;" that is, faculty members' DOEs should be altered so that they can be assigned more teaching.

Beside the clear workload implications, the Administration's imposition of policies, procedures and processes has had a dramatic and disturbing impact on the university's core missions of teaching and scholarship. The Collective Agreement defines scholarship in terms of the creation, synthesis and application of knowledge. Departmental T&P Guidelines capture the many activities that fit this description. In the PPP, however, the Administration reduced this broad notion of scholarship to just research impact, with the impact measured questionably in terms of H-indices and crassly in terms of funding. Members in the College of Business and Economics have seen a Research Chair initiative that funds only research that the Dean deems appropriate, following on the heels of an integrated planning process and strategic mandate agreement defined and written by the Administration with only minimal faculty consultation. Departments and individual faculty members must choose between (1) defining their research /scholarship directions themselves, and thus risking being starved or marginalized, and (2) chasing whatever initiatives and metrics the Administration defines.

The AIC's past communications have addressed President Summerlee's comments in the press regarding his belief that faculty at the University of Guelph must move to predominantly on-line teaching, the Provost's attraction to the NCAT model, and similar ideas from the Administration-invited George Mehaffy. Recently the Associate Vice-

President Academic commented in the press about what he sees as the need for faculty to change their assessment of students in keeping with learning outcomes. Ironically, the AVPA referred to a “sense of collective mission” that he has defined by himself, or in concert with other administrators, but not with faculty. The Administration believes that it has the right to determine what curriculum faculty should teach and how they should teach and assess it.

This conception of “management rights” regarding teaching and curriculum, as well as research and scholarship, poses a real threat to academic freedom at Guelph. More fundamentally, at a time when both governments and corporations are seeking greater influence regarding what programs universities will offer, the end of academic job security equals the end of academic freedom. The UGFA will defend job security, will strengthen protections on workload, and will seek to roll back the growing administrative imposition. This will be a struggle, however, and the UGFA negotiating team will need the Members’ full support. The stakes are very high.

Members with opinions or information to share are invited to contact:

Chair, Financial Advisory Committee

Professor Herb Kunze (Math & Stats)

hkunze@uoguelph.ca

Chair, Academic Integrity Committee

Professor Bill Cormack (History)

wcormack@uoguelph.ca

